

the past offers no exception, the character of art at the present day confirms it.

As the arts gradually emerged from the obscurity in which they were buried (fostered by a patronage peculiarly favourable for the development of their loftiest powers), they began to assert their true position and exercise their legitimate influence on society; and while the monuments of classic art were rapidly falling to decay, another style of architecture arose, based on principles of construction and of composition almost as diametrically opposite to those of classic art as the source from whence it sprung, the purposes to which it was dedicated, and the character of the age and people amongst whom it originated. The sculptural accessories are no less different in character than the architecture with which they are associated. These sculptural accessories (often vigorous in design and well conceived, consisting principally of isolated figures, stiff and constrained, distributed and arranged rather by conventional and prescribed ideas of symbolism than by rules of artistic composition), convey ideas more by symbolical arrangement than by a combination of action and expression; of this perhaps the fronts of Wells and Exeter Cathedrals may be adduced as the most striking examples. Thus in the sculptural decoration of mediæval architecture we observe a style of art too subordinate in its character, too circumscribed in its views, and too much fettered by conventional forms to expand and assert an independent position; aiming solely at the expression of devotional feeling by the adoption of the most simple forms. These remarks do not apply to the artists of the revival in Italy; who, forming their taste on the model of the antique, united to these sentiments the lofty expression of intellect and ideal perfection; and thus produced a distinguishing merit and charm in their works. In the revival of the classic styles in Italy, we, in the treatment of the two arts of architecture and sculpture, meet with the observance of the same principles which guided the artists of classic times; but not, however, carried out with the same refinement of feeling and correctness of taste. The vigorous and fertile imagination of the great Italian masters (though it enabled them to trace out their own path, and to imitate the example and catch the feeling without tamely copying their model) often betrayed them into irregularity, which marred the effect of their most successful works; while by artists of inferior talent, exaggerated action and expression, eccentricity, and extravagant conceits, were too often confounded with the bold originality and vigorous conceptions of true genius. Of these defects the palaces and churches of Italy afford innumerable instances, which will immediately occur to those acquainted with the works of these masters. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that the peculiar character of the Italian style admitted a freedom of treatment in the sculptural accessories which would be offensive and inadmissible in more correct and regular compositions, but at the same time it will be obvious that there is a limit to these irregularities, which can only be assigned by good taste and discriminating judgment on the part of the artist himself.

The first and most important point is to observe a perfect accordance in style and character with that of the building to which we apply it, that it not only should illustrate its object and purpose, by intelligible and appropriate allegory, but convey it also with congruity of feeling and sentiment, even to the minutæ of execution, (for the skilful architect not only adapts the main features of his building to the purpose for which it is designed, but also expresses it in every member, and moulds every detail in exact accordance). But to produce that harmony and propriety (which is the source of our most agreeable sensations in contemplating the productions of art), we must in addition, distribute it so judiciously through the composition, and so nicely adjust it in proportion and position, that it shall appear an integral portion of the design,—the work as it were of one hand, and so completely the expression of one idea, that a chasm and void would be created by its removal: that neither by disproportionate size, nor too prominent a position, it should obtrude offensively on the eye; nor by the opposite extreme appear to retire too much and lose its legitimate effect and place in the

composition. The regulation and nice adjustment of these points cannot, however, be determined by rule, since every individual case will require a different treatment, but it must altogether be attained by that refinement and correctness of taste on the part of the artist which can only result from a careful and accurate study of the best models, united with the greatest judgement and discrimination.

As a subordinate and purely decorative feature, it will be of the utmost importance that the outline of the sculpture should be regulated by, and accord most accurately with, that of the architecture; and that it fill up with precision those circumscribing lines within which it is placed; that there be no protuberance, undue projection, or ungraceful deflection in the contour, either in itself, or in combination; and that it do not interfere with, or break off those main lines which indicate the constructive features of the building, or the continuity of which expresses the arrangement and proportions of the composition.

It will also be found a point of considerable importance, in combining sculpture with architecture, to adopt a sober and subdued style of composition in the position and arrangement, and particularly in the treatment, of the draperies and accessories, not only in isolated figures and in those which form the terminations and crowning members, but also in the composition of the friezes and pediments. The confusion produced by exaggerated action or intricate grouping will be immediately detected by its decomposing and harshly contrasting, without relieving, the lines of the architecture; though on the other hand must be avoided a meagre and straggling arrangement, and the stiff effect arising from perpendicular and horizontal lines. The value of sculpture as a decoration (independent of the sentiment it conveys) consists much in the relief it affords by carrying up the eye with its graceful terminations; filling up what would otherwise be void and blank, with varied and undulating lines and forms of the most exquisite beauty. The success with which the artists of Greece moulded and adapted these requirements will prove that, when properly treated, they tend neither to cramp the ideas nor to shackle the invention of the artist.

If it be necessary to observe these rules in the treatment of groups, it will be found still more so in the case of isolated figures; and the infringement of them produces still more ungraceful effects. On the revival of art in Italy, distortion and exaggerated action and expression were too frequently confounded with originality and vigour of execution; and we are continually meeting in their works with the most striking instances both of the infringement of these rules and the ungraceful effects resulting therefrom.

In placing sculpture in juxtaposition with architecture, it is obviously a point of no small importance to consider the scale thereby imparted to the composition. It will hardly be necessary to demonstrate with argument, that with which every artist must be acquainted; viz., that magnitude is relative rather than actual, and that by skilfully proportioning details, or by placing in juxtaposition features, with the size of which, by habit, experience, or instinct, we are acquainted, with those of which we have no other data for determining the magnitude, he can impart a fictitious scale to his composition; or that by diminishing one feature and exaggerating another, he can, by this comparison, produce an idea of magnitude which the actual size does not possess. In practice, this, nevertheless, has but too frequently been lost sight of; and in many instances, where circumstances institute the comparison, it has been rather the result of accident than design. Perhaps this remark might be more justly restricted to the revival and later productions of art; since, in the works of the antique, we continually observe not only its application, but the success with which it has been attended. The principle must, however, obviously become of peculiar importance in the case of sculpture, since the proportion of the human figure is that with which we are most naturally and necessarily acquainted, and one which we perhaps more readily apply than any other (adjusting everything to this scale instinctively), and although, to a certain extent, the scale of the sculptural accessories, particularly the iso-

lated figures, will be indicated by various circumstances in the proportions of the architecture, it is not absolutely or invariably so, and the advantage to be gained by skilfully adjusting this scale must never be lost sight of. When, by being in due proportion to the members of the architecture, it would become too colossal, it might be preferable to adopt a different species of decoration; since, where the ordinary features of the composition are merely increased in actual size, and the same relative proportions observed, the scale by which we measure is increased in nearly the same ratio. We may also observe, that the undue exaggeration of the human figure beyond its natural proportions, so far from invariably producing an effect of grandeur, is sometimes productive of impressions akin to those resulting from actual deformity; the proportioning these parts is, however, a point which must depend solely upon the judgment of the artist, and one for which no rule can be laid down: a careful study of the best models and an accurate observation of works already executed, will form the best and perhaps the only guide.

When we observe how necessary to produce a pleasing and harmonious effect (even in isolated works, which are to be considered as complete in themselves and not affected by external circumstances) are the duly balancing the corresponding parts of the composition; the skilfully contrasting and combining forms and lines of varying contour; the duly filling in and adjusting every part so as to give one outline to the mass, however varied in detail,—it is obvious, that in combination with architecture, the slightest discrepancy or failing in this respect will be exaggerated, by contrast with the regularity of the lines and masses with which it is associated; and to this point, therefore, the artist must direct his most diligent attention.

In designing groups and figures which crown and form the termination of the composition, it will be found of the greatest importance that the figures in every aspect appear in perfect equilibrium, and firmly planted and balanced on the pedestal on which they stand, devoid of any protuberance or projection, either in limb or drapery, which may appear to throw the mass more on one side than on the other. It will for this purpose be found necessary carefully to study the work from every possible point of sight from which it can be seen: since we have continually to observe that though perfect when viewed in some positions, this due equilibrium of the mass is disturbed when seen in others, and that even, when, in reality and mechanically speaking, it is duly poised.

Of the ill effects resulting from an imperfect or partial study of this important point, the works of the artists of the revival above alluded to (though masters of perspective and perspective effects) afford innumerable instances; while of consummate skill and science in meeting these requirements, the inimitable productions of the Grecian chisel afford at once a most striking example, and to the artist an invaluable model for study.

An important part of the subject of the application of sculpture to architecture is the employment of caryatides in the place of the column to support the entablature of the orders. Whether the origin of this feature be that related by Vitruvius, or whether it resulted merely in the fertile and lively imagination of the artist adopting this form for variety only, it will hardly be worth our while to consider: though the employment of the human figure combined with massive columns, but not aiding in the support of the mass above, occurring in the Egyptian temples, might induce the belief that the idea has been already suggested by precedent, and that the character it assumed in Grecian architecture was merely the result of the more refined taste of the artist. The instances in which they were employed, and the manner in which they have been treated, has been already considered, as also that of the same feature by the artists of the revival in Italy. It has elsewhere been but very sparingly adopted. Jean Goujon has left us some admirable specimens of his taste and skill in the Louvre at Paris, which exhibit all the chaste and refined feeling of the antique combined with the freedom of the revival. Inigo Jones's circular court of caryatides, in the Palace at Whitehall, though not executed,